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ALEXA. GAZETTE & VIRGINIA ADVERTISER.
(FOR THE COUNTRY.)
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Marriage and Death Notices, when not exceeding eight lines fifty cents.

"The Rage for Finery."
Under this title the New York World has a practical and suggestive article.

Two books have lately been issued, one from the American the other from the English press which deserve the careful attention of the tender sex. We mean Miss Phelps' "What to Wear" and "How to Dress as a Lady on \$15 a Year."

Miss Phelps addressed herself to the subject from a hygienic point of view especially, but the economic is scarcely less important to the majority.

For some time past it has been generally conceded in Europe that "American ladies dress magnificently," and this is perfectly true. It is, of course, pleasant for an American abroad to hear the tributes given to the exquisiteness of his lady friend's taste, more especially if he had not the privilege of paying the bills of those who exemplify it, but nevertheless here is beginning to ask whether they do not pay somewhat too dear for sustaining the national credit in point of finery attire.

The difficulty about this and so many other matters in this free country is that we all want to be equal nowadays, although we are dreadfully unequal in purse. "When I dine with a man of \$6,000 a year," said a millionaire, "he gives me just the same dinner as when I dine with one who has \$60,000 a year, though how the devil he manages it I don't know."

Some one well remarked, too, as another indication of would-be equality, that the poorer classes nowadays live in most countries quite as well as have a cheap and picturesque attire, and look merely as though they were wearing the shabby old clothes of the rich. If this be a progress very little to be desired.

The love of dress in this country has, since the war especially, assumed most alarming proportions. Those who look at the matter superficially may think, "Oh, it is very harmless and doesn't much matter;" and if immorality is of comparatively little consequence, but if it does—and there are yet many people who think it does, and whose opinion is entitled to as much respect—it matters very much indeed, inasmuch as it is tending to beget immorality in the women of this country.

During the war a class of very uncultivated men notoriously accumulated rapid fortunes. Their wives were as common as themselves. Such persons had but one way of asserting their consequence—display. It might have been expected that in such a city as New York, where there was a large number of persons of education and refinement, the splendors of these nouveaux riches would not have affected the old families that did the gorgeous coach and caparisoned steeds of the city.

Unfortunately, however, as a lady of ancient knickerbocker stock put it, "We were such fools that we allowed ourselves to be influenced by these upstart vulgarians. And there arose a sort of race in dress between the mushroom and the oak."

New York influences the country so much that this race for finery became as common as houses after Hott's discovery of roast pig in Charlie Lamb's story. Rem quoniam modo rem became, and continues, the cry, "Rem!" meaning in this instance finery, and quoniam modo a surrender of all that a woman ought not to surrender.

Do not let our lady readers imagine that we are here making idle statements—we have ample grounds for such assertions. Nor is it only the Massachusetts factory girl and such as she who is thus led astray; hundreds of married women in a much higher class, who would but for this accursed thirst for finery have been true as steel to their husbands, finding themselves involved in emulation with women five times as rich, get into debt, fear to tell their husbands, and borrowing money from men who are waiting to see them fall into the trap, find themselves sinking into infamy which when they married they could scarcely believe possible. Love of finery is in fact the parent of miserable matrimony and divorce.

And there is another and not unimportant side to the question. On all hands in the higher classes comes the complaint that the young men won't marry. And it may be admitted that when the young men say they can't afford it there is much ground for the excuse. And it is to be borne in mind that the expense of many of these same young men gain of other men's wives is very often by no means of a nature to encourage an ardor for matrimony.

How many homes, too, are rendered materially dreary by this passion for dress. Good food, nice furniture, prints, books, and various trifles go to make up the sum of a comfortable home cannot be afforded because Mrs. Robinson would die rather than that Mrs. Jones should see her again at church or at the Browns' party in that mauve silk. Men cannot be too resolute in the steps they take to diminish this great evil. Most women are amenable to reasonable arguments persistently urged by those they regard with affection, and the remonstrances and representations of a father especially are likely to carry weight with his children, whose errors often arise from the absence of such sensible counsel precisely at that period of life when it is most needed.

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HOUSE lot of Queen street, on Union st. Apply at the office of the Hampshire and Baltimore Coal Co.

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